

2006 Annual Report (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006)

North Yakima Conservation District



Washington Conservation Districts
assisting land managers with their
conservation choices

Featured Natural Resource Accomplishment of the Year for the NYCD

Garretson Fish Screen and Barrier Removal Project Cowiche Creek, Yakima County

Resource Challenge: Cowiche Creek is a high priority tributary for salmon recovery in the Yakima River Basin. Steelhead, Coho, Bull Trout and resident fish all rely on the high quality habitat that the Creek provides. Throughout the watershed un-screen irrigation diversions, passage barriers, un-metered water withdrawals and areas of poor riparian habitat impede recovery of fishery resources.

Project Summary: NYCD has developed several programs and agreements to address the resource challenges of the Cowiche Creek. The Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP), DOE-Water Metering Contract and the Conservation Commission – Implementation Grant all have provided technical and financial assistance to the Garretson Project. This Project corrected a passage barrier caused by an irrigation diversion, implemented a compliant fish screen and the landowner cost-shared on a water metering device that will allow him to meet the Yakima Adjudication Court Order.

Results and Accomplishments: Several significant results came from the implementation of this Project, the first was the opening of 6.65 miles of upstream access to good quality habitat within the Cowiche Canyon. Screening of the irrigation diversion was also a major accomplishment because the associated water right is significant in this reach of the Creek system versus mid to late summer base flows. The result of which would be the historical stranding of hundreds



if not thousands of fish annually. Because flow is an issue in this reach of the Creek system the implementation of a water metering device will insure that water withdrawal is in accordance with the priority water right. Although the project area was small, riparian habitat was established and adjacent landowners have been interested in protecting their riparian areas as a result of the Districts work.

Key Partners Involved:

Cowiche Ck Tributary Team (local residents)
YTAHP Program
YTAHP Core Team (multi resource agencies)

Funding: Garretson Project

County & Other Local: \$1,500.00

State: \$3,200.00

Federal: \$75,256.67

Private \$610.0

Total \$79,956.64

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NYCD Board of Supervisors:

Gail Thornton, Keith Boss, Bill Gillespie and
Dustin Melius

Legislative Districts:

State Legislative District # 13, 14, 15

Congressional District # 4

Annual Status Report of Natural Resources

North Yakima Conservation District

Background Summary of the North Yakima Conservation District

The North Yakima Conservation District was formed through consolidation of three smaller Districts that included the Highland C.D., Wenas C.D., and the Ahtanum-Moxee C.D. in December of 1982. NYCD is bordered by the crest of the Cascade Mountains to the west and the Columbia River to the east with the Yakima County line and Ahtanum Ridge forming the northern and southern boundaries respectfully. The NYCD has 13 identified watershed all having resource priorities ranging from fish recovery, step-shrub, rangeland to forestry. The NYCD is a political subdivision of Washington State government organized under "Conservation District Law", RCW Title 89, Chapter 89.08.

Mission of the North Yakima Conservation District

The mission of the North Yakima Conservation District is to make available technical, financial and educational resources to meet the conservation needs of the citizens who occupy and use the natural resources within our District.

Natural Resource Priorities and Goals:

Water Quantity: By 2009 the Cowiche Watershed will yield enough water for legal uses and fish and wildlife needs.

Ag Preservation-Urban Interface-Land use planning: Complete by 2009, plan(s) for land uses that strive to maintain agricultural use.

Water Quality: By 2007 identify Water Quality issues that will lead to implementation of corrective actions.

Fish and Wildlife: By 2009 assist all affected landowners with compliance issues related to the Endangered Species Act and State

requirements regarding fish species on privately held lands within NYCD's Geographic Priority Areas.

Information – Education Priorities and Goals:

Information/Education: By 2007 increase the knowledge level of all landowners listed on NYCD's assessment role.

Critical Geographic Areas:

The geographic priority areas of the NYCD are the Cowiche Watershed, Ahtanum Watershed and the Wide Hollow Watershed.

Natural Resources Information & Status

The North Yakima Conservation District encompasses 1,216,000 total acres (903,040 in public ownership and 312,960 in private ownership). Land types include rangeland, steppe shrub, forest, irrigated cropland, riparian, urban and other. NYCD's Annual and 5-year plans have priorities directed at assisting landowners on all these land types. This assistance will implement programs to promote good stewardship practices and best management practice (BMP) implementation as well as address TMDL issues, endangered species act concerns, GMA regulations, and critical areas ordinances to name a few. To date NYCD has implemented BMP's and management practices on approximately 9,500 acres.

Water Resources: Portions of the Yakima main stem river (middle section) and the Naches, Tieton and American Rivers are within the District. Tributaries include the Ahtanum, Wide Hollow, Wenas, Cowiche, Nile, Rattlesnake as well as several smaller Creeks and Drains. Rimrock, Wenas, Bumping and Clear lakes serve as storage reservoirs for irrigation. There are currently 3 TMDL's being implemented with the Districts assistance.